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BAPTISTS

New Zealand Baptists ask for prayer

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand (BP) — Two weeks after a 6.3-magnitude earthquake demolished much of Christchurch, New Zealand, emergency workers are still putting bodies from the rubble and residents are being told to keep boiling or treating drinking water.

A New Zealand Baptist leader has asked believers worldwide to pray for their country during a time of unprecedented struggle. "This is a time of severe trauma and uncharted territory for all people," Kelvyn Fairhall, national administrator of Baptist Churches of New Zealand, said in a statement sent to the Baptist Global Response relief and development organization.

"There will be huge questions and issues that our pastors and their leaders have to grapple with over the next few days, weeks and months."

Baptists assessing Japan relief needs

TOKYO (BP and local reports) — A two-member Southern Baptist disaster relief assessment team arrived in Tokyo March 12 as the estimated death toll from Japan's earthquake soared past 10,000 and nuclear plant operators feared core meltdowns inside at least three reactors.

An untold number of survivors are coping with near-freezing temperatures and no food, drinking water, or shelter for hundreds of miles along Japan's northeastern coast, which was wrecked March 11 by the one-two punch of a 9.0-magnitude earthquake and 23-foot tsunami wave.

The Baptist assessment team made contact with a representative of Tokyo Baptist Church after arriving in Tokyo, said Jeff Palmer, executive director of the Baptist Global Response (BGR) relief and development organization.

"Tokyo Baptist Church will provide our first point of contact and partnership for our initial assessment," Palmer said. "The assessment team will explore links with Japanese Baptists, the Japanese government, and the NGO (non-governmental organization) community. Once the initial assessment is done, we will create a blueprint to guide our relief efforts."

BGR expects to move into a broad relief initiative in partnership with churches of the Japan Baptist Convention, Palmer said.

The Japanese government has requested international assistance for the large-scale relief effort. Two U.S. aircraft carrier groups are off Japan's coast, beginning to help deliver food and water, according to new reports. Two U.S. search and rescue teams arrived March 13.

The government, however, has said it does not intend to request large numbers of international volunteers, so the BGR strategy will be designed around partnership initiatives with Japan Baptist churches, Palmer said.

Working through those congregations, who have deep ties in their communities, will ensure the effectiveness of relief efforts, he said, and also guarantee donations will be used efficiently since a portion of gifts will not have to be diverted to cover overhead expenses.

Don Gann, consultant in the Men's Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) in Jackson, said March 14 that Mississippi Baptists are prepared to help as relief efforts are ramped up.

"If teams are requested by Japanese Baptist leadership through BGR, the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force is ready to send trained disaster relief volunteers to the areas of need. We always seek to work with established Baptist churches and ministries in disaster areas as well as Southern Baptist Convention field personnel, because it makes the relief aid more effective as part of a long-term strategy of outreach.

"While an assessment is being made at this time by Southern Baptist representatives meeting with Japanese Baptist leaders, a fund has been started for aid to



Japan. Donations received will be channeled to Baptist disaster relief work in Japan as opportunities are identified. Checks should be made payable to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, with 'Japan Disaster Assistance' noted on the memo line. Donations may be mailed to MBCB Business Office, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. No in-kind donations are being accepted at this time.

"Any questions can be directed to the MBCB Men's Ministry Department at the post office box listed above. Telephone: (601) 292-3334 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 334. E-mail: cwright@mcb.org"

Japanese Christians, although a small minority of the battered Asian nation's populace, gathered in churches and Bible studies Sunday to pray for those still missing after the March 11 earthquake — now listed as 9.0 in magnitude — and tsunami that followed.

Teresa Seelen, a Southern Baptist missionary, worshipped at one church where believers spent the entire service praying for friends and family by name, as well as collecting a love offering for disaster relief following the country's strongest-ever earthquake and the tsunami's walls of seawater that destroyed vast numbers of neighborhoods and villages along Japan's northern Pacific coast.

"Through tears, they called out names and lifted them to God," Seelen said of the members' prayers. "We prayed for courage for the believers to reach out with the Gospel. ... It was precious to see the generosity of this small group of believers."

With most stores and gas stations closed, the main task for many in the hardest-hit areas Sunday was just getting by. Scores lined up at the few gas stations and grocery stores that were open. International Mission Board (IMB) missionary Sharon Bennett said shelves were largely empty amid the rush to get food.

Japanese authorities were continuing to operate on the presumption March 14 that meltdowns may be underway at three nuclear reactors after the earthquake and tsunami.

However, government officials said there are so far no indications of hazardous emissions of radioactive material into the atmosphere. About 180,000 people have been evacuated from the area.

No IMB personnel live within the area affected by the evacuations, said Renae Oue, another IMB representative in Japan.

IMB missionaries to Japan spent most of their weekend shoveling tons of sand and sludge with their neighbors.

Almost every street near the home of Sharon Bennett and her husband Mark in northern Japan was buckled, cracked, and covered with gray sand. A few children played in the park as adults worked together.

The Bennetts were homeschooling when the largest earthquake in Japan's history hit. They took shelter under a table and watched as items fell off shelves and walls.

"I prayed out loud," Mark Bennett said. "In my heart I was preparing for the worst. I honestly thought the house was going to come down on top of us. After 20 years in Japan, this was the worst and longest earthquake I have ever felt. I was preparing myself to meet the Lord."

A seemingly endless barrage of aftershocks shook the country all weekend. The U.S. Geological Survey reported more than 140 such quakes of magnitude 4.5 and higher, including a 6.2-magnitude quake Sunday morning.

While officials mounted efforts to avert a possible nuclear crisis, rescuers continued to frantically scramble to find survivors. Rescuers dug through mud and rubble, rescuing survivors and recovering bodies.

Japan's National Police Agency says that in one coastal town, Minamisanriku, around 9,500 people — half the town's population — are unaccounted for.



EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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In the name of celebrity worship

For the average Martian who lands on earth, it must be truly difficult to understand the fame and fortune that America provides its celebrities. While the northern half of the world's third largest economy — until recently the world's second largest economy — has virtually disappeared along with many of its inhabitants due to a history-making earthquake and subsequent tsunami, we spend hours in front of our televisions trying to get a glimpse of Britney Spears' cellulite and Brad Pitt's latest sexy photos.

The Middle East may be in flames and our foreign oil supply may be in jeopardy, but what we really want to know are the latest vulgar shenanigans of the Kardashians and Lindsay Lohan. It appears we are much more interested in spending our time preying on the private lives of stars than we are praying for the lost.

We adore celebrities. We can't get enough of them, and it seems the worse their behavior the more we crave knowledge about them. We obviously prefer the Jersey Shore lifestyle over the Christian lifestyle. Even celebrity wife beaters are elevated to god-like status.

There is apparently no indignity we won't swallow to keep this insanity going, but occasionally someone or some situation comes along that stuns even the most jaded celebrity worshippers. Such is the twisted saga of James Frey.

Avid readers will remember Frey for his perverse 2003 autobiographical book, *A Million Little Pieces*. That book, of course, was proven to be a massive fraud filled with lies and misleading descriptions about his life experiences. He initially defended the book as a true and realistic depiction of his life, but was ultimately forced to admit his artifice on national television and include an author's note in all subsequent printings of the book.

Frey received his just dues, of course, American style. He immediately achieved celebrity status and signed a seven-figure, three-book deal with one of the largest publishers in the U.S. How has Frey used this second chance at public redemption? Frey has taken it upon himself to self-publish his latest

masterpiece, *The Final Testament of the Holy Bible*. Apparently no legitimate publisher will touch it.

According to a March 14 article in the New York Post, Frye's lead character in the book, Ben Jones, is depicted as the Messiah, a destitute alcoholic and pot smoker in the Bronx who impregnates a prostitute, seduces men, and teaches his followers that the Bible is "antiquated" and "meaningless."

The Post also quotes Jones the Messiah in the book as preaching, "Faith is what you use to oppress, to justify, to judge in the name of God... a means to rationalize more evil in this world than anything in history. If there were a devil, faith would be his greatest invention."

Lovely. Frey told the Post that the novel is "a theoretical third volume of the Bible — there was the Old, there was the New, and this is the Final. I'm sure the religious right will go crazy because the story of Ben... is hardly the Messiah they have in mind. But I don't really care... I tried to write a radical book... I'm releasing it in a radical way."

Apparently, part of his radical strategy is to release the book on Good Friday for "maximum impact in the U.S." the Post article noted.

It should surprise no one if Frey's latest handiwork is a huge success, despite his track record of untruthfulness and deceit. Shame on America for glorifying such trash, in the name of celebrity worship and at the expense of our Lord and Savior.

Jesus Christ is hardly the figure presented in novels like *The Final Testament of the Bible*, but it's not by accident that He is almost always presented in modern literature and the entertainment industry as loathsome, licentious, and self-serving.

In truth, He is the resurrected Son of God who sits at the right hand of the Father, dressed in robes of pure radiance the brightness of which we cannot imagine. He is indeed coming again, but it won't be as a sexually opportunistic alcoholic and drug user in a dingy New York City borough.

Some of us get that, and some of us don't. It makes a difference. It really does. On that fateful day of judgment, let there be no doubt which side each of us has chosen.



Lamar County
March 21, 2011
9 AM

Lamar County Courthouse
403 Main St
Purvis 39475

Jones County
March 24, 2011
4 PM

Jones County Courthouse
415 North 5th Ave
Laurel 39440

Forrest County
March 21, 2011
11 AM

Forrest County Multipurpose Center
Parking Lot
962 Sullivan Rd
Hattiesburg 39401

Desoto County
March 28, 2011
10 AM

Hernando Baptist Church
11 East Center St
Hernando 38632

Perry County
March 21, 2011
2 PM

Perry County Courthouse
103 Main St
New Augusta 39462

Marshall County
March 28, 2011
2 PM

Marshall County Courthouse
128 W. Van Dorn Ave
Holly Springs 38635

Pearl River County
March 21, 2011
4 PM

Pearl River County Courthouse
200 S. Main St
Poplarville 39470

Lafayette County
March 28, 2011
4 PM

Lafayette County Courthouse
1 Courthouse Square
North Steps
Oxford 38655

Jefferson Davis County
March 24, 2011
9 AM

Jefferson Davis County
Courthouse (lawn)
911 Third St
Prentiss 39474

Pontotoc County
March 29, 2011
9 AM

Pontotoc Town Square
59 S. Main St
Pontotoc 38863

Covington County
March 24, 2011
11 AM

Covington County Courthouse
(lawn)
101 S. Dogwood Ave
Collins 39428

Lee County
March 29, 2011
11 AM

Lee County Justice Center
200 W. Jefferson
Tupelo 38804

Jones County
March 24, 2011
2 PM

Jones County Courthouse
101 North Court St
Ellisville 39437

Itawamba County
March 29, 2011
2 PM

Itawamba County Courthouse
201 East Main
Fulton 38843

Monroe County
March 29, 2011
4 PM

Frisco Park
109 Main St
Amory 38821

2

3

Pakistan Christians suffer assassinations

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (BP) — Shahbaz Bhatti, the only Christian adherent in Pakistan's government, was assassinated March 2 after pushing for reform of harsh blasphemy laws that mandate death for people who turn away from or "insult" Islam.

More than 10,000 people, including Christians, Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims, attended Bhatti's burial March 4 in Khushpur. Banners and posters Pakistan's minister of minorities, were set up in the streets.

"Shahbaz Bhatti, son of the Nation, will be missed," one banner read. Songs rang out as well as such chants as, "We will carry on your mission Bhatti."

At one memorial service a teenager stood up and asked those attending if they thought anyone in the world had ever heard of Shahbaz Bhatti before the tragic shooting. "No," she said, answering her own question, "but this week, everybody with a television could hear him testify about Jesus Christ. Even after death, God has used Shahbaz Bhatti for His work!"

Bhatti predicted his own assassination and recorded a message months ago that was to be released upon his death and now has been viewed all over the world. "I am living for my community and for suffering people," Bhatti said directly into the camera, "and I will die to defend their rights. I prefer to die for my principles and for the justice of my community rather than to compromise."

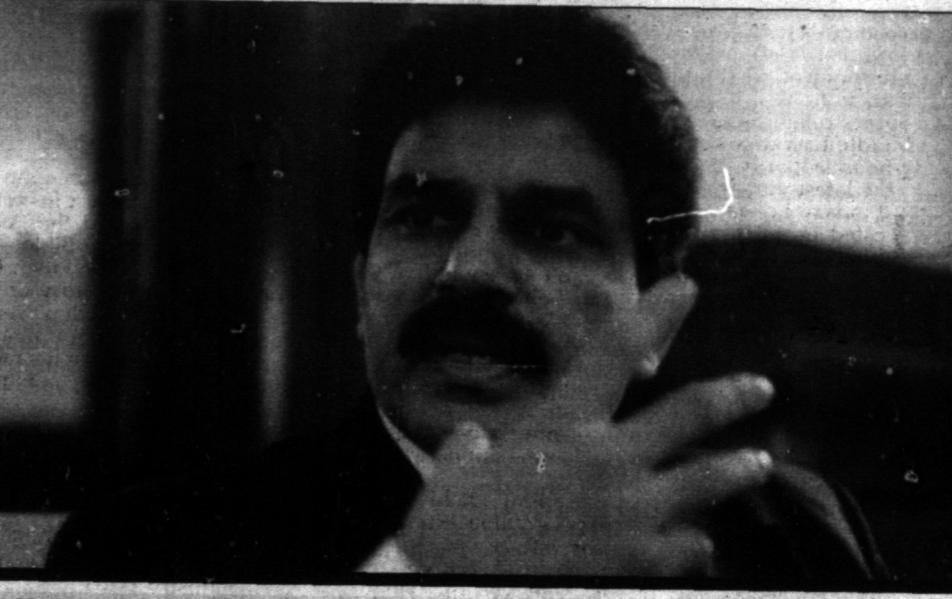
Even with three days set aside by the government for mourning, a Christian worker said many in Pakistan's Christian community found it hard to speak openly about Bhatti or their feelings for fear they would be targeted for persecution.

"On a normal day, Christians are the persecuted minority here," said longtime worker Worth Ballinger (not his real name), explaining that only 1.5% of Pakistan's 185 million people profess to be Christian.

"People are hiding their emotions for the most part, except where they have been protesting," he said.

Hundreds of women with black flags marched on March 4 in Khushpur, demanding the murderers be captured and hanged. Tears rolled in front of Bhatti's family home where a large portrait of him stood.

In Islamabad, Christians who were denied the chance to say a final goodbye to Bhatti at a memorial service protested across the street from the Catholic church. In other places around the country, crowds were calm and well behaved, enduring their grief and pain.



ASSASSINATED — Pakistan's Christian minority spent the weekend of March 5-6 paying respect to the man who openly stood for his faith in a nation known for persecuting Christians.

Ballinger said some Christians are encouraging one another to be people of hope and courage and to show love in this difficult time. Several college students reminded those attending a memorial service that they were to "love our enemies" and to "be witnesses in this place."

"Why do you think God has birthed us in this country?" one student asked fellow mourners. "It's to give a testimony for Jesus Christ. We must give a faithful testimony here so that people around the world can know the truth about Jesus."

Pakistani Christians are calling for prayer, including:

- Punjabi Christians and believers around Pakistan who are more than ever threatened and without legal protection. They are not treated as equal citizens and have little rights in the area of religious expression.

In Islamabad, Christians who were denied the chance to say a final goodbye to Bhatti at a memorial service protested across the street from the Catholic church. In other places around the country, crowds were calm and well behaved, enduring their grief and pain.

- God's use of Shahbaz Bhatti's witness to encourage Christians to speak out for their faith in the face of persecution.

- More fearless Christian leaders to rise to positions of power who will provide more freedom for Christians to practice their faith.

Looking back

10 years ago

A. Joseph King, Southwestern Seminary professor of conducting and associate dean of the school's performance division, is installed as the first occupant of the Robert L. Burton Chair of Conducting. Burton was King's former professor and former minister of music at First Church, Brookhaven.

20 years ago

In what may be a wartime first, the number of professions of faith exceeds the number of U.S. casualties during Operation Desert Storm. At least 1,200 professions of faith were recorded by Southern Baptist chaplains serving in the Persian Gulf.

30 years ago

First Church, Newton, holds dedication services for their new \$102,000 education annex Mar. 5. Chester L. Quarles, executive secretary of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, delivers the dedicatory message. J.N. Triplett, pastor.



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YOU CAN RESPOND
RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)

2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)

3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

PRAYER POINTS —
MORNING MEETINGS



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

• Prayer Points

As we encourage people to be a part of Covering Mississippi in Prayer, we keep asking folks to join in a prayer time before eight o'clock each morning. While prayer can take place anywhere and anytime day or night, as you prepare to go to work, or school, or to begin your daily routine, what a marvelous thing it is to meet with the Father and to hear from God before talking with everyone else. Jesus seemed to practice this and it is beautifully stated in Mark 1:35, "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." I am convinced that if you develop a morning meeting with the Lord, it will be an enriching and long-term inspirational experience. What can happen in these morning meetings?

First, there can be communion with God. Can you imagine Jesus going out alone to solitary place, and there He meets and talks with the Father before any interaction with the disciples or challenges from His opponents? If you see prayer as a wonderful meeting with God — the One who made you, knows you, loves you, forgives you, and will lead you through the day — it can make a wonderful difference just to commune with Him. Actually, it can change your approach to prayer and make a difference in your attitude about prayer. If at times your prayer life becomes dull, dreary, or even dreaded, realize that it is a magnificent opportunity for you to spend time with our great Creator God.

A friend of mine had the opportunity to be at the White House and was invited to come and meet with the President in the Oval office. He was telling me about the event and the amount of time

that the President gave him and a few others. He was just absolutely giddy as he told about the meeting. While I have never been there, I was impressed that he got to go. I thought about what an incredible privilege I have in being invited by the God of all the ages to come and meet with Him and spend as much time as I would like just visiting with Him.

The second thing that can happen out of this morning meeting is consistency can be put in place. Virtually every area of discipline in life is eroded by lack of consistency. You can be preparing for a marathon, studying a foreign language, or trying to stay on a diet, and one of the essential components of your success will be consistency. It is also true in the spiritual life or in this case, the dimension of your prayer life. I am not talking about forming a habit in your life to pray, but an unalterable consistency of wanting to meet with God. I am talking about being consistent in meeting with God simply, studiously, and day by day. If you do that over a period of time, that consistency will pay rich dividends. It will be difficult to get away from that living pattern.

A third feature of the morning meetings is contentment. Let's suppose that each morning you faithfully meet with God and look over your entire day. There are some

things that you need to deal with because they are routine. There are other things that may be challenging or difficult to deal with, and you know they are out there and you will face them. You hold them up to God. Of course there are those things that are just absolutely off the radar, the unknowns you will face in the day. Prayer can so lock you into God that you will be assured of His presence throughout the day. Whatever you are facing there will be a contentment reigning in your heart. Isaiah said, "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, shifting waves that seem to go one way and then another but always in turmoil and dis-

content" (Isa. 57:20). The man or woman who walks with God in prayer finds an unusual, even amazing sense of contentment that comes over their heart.

A fourth thing that grows out of the morning meetings is conclusion. I am not speaking of just the fact that the prayer time ends. I am speaking of the fact that the prayer time does not end. The conclusion leads into an unending series of events in which you can triumphantly rest in God's love for you and with a confidence that you know He is going to provide day after day. The immediate prayer moment may cease, but it leads to a bold faith. You know that as you walk through the day, God will neither leave you nor forsake you.

If you have been meeting with Him in the mornings, keep it up. If for some reason you started, got diverted, and stopped, start over. If you started, stopped, and just got stuck in doing nothing and going nowhere, allow the Lord to come and reinvigorate you and to carry you along in the days ahead. Meet Him in the mornings!

The author can be contacted at jfutral@mbcb.org.

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SUWM NB ZNC, GJHTJ

KUFQKJ UGUW KJQ DHL

NB KJQ GNXSC.

ANJL NLQ: KGQLKV-

LHLQ

Clue: G = W

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark One: Eleven

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THE BAPTIST RECORD

Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

• Prayer Points

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The time has come for our nation to resolve its immigration dilemma. It is imperative that we find an acceptable solution to the disposition of the millions of undocumented immigrants living in our nation.

Currently, the two extremes of deportation and amnesty are being played against each other, resulting in a stalemate in Congress. We believe that neither of the two extremes are appropriate, workable solutions. To force those who are here illegally to leave is neither politically viable nor humanitarian. To offer blanket amnesty to those who broke the immigration laws of our country and their own countries is disrespectful of the rule of law. What is needed is a solution that respects the rule of law while at the same time treats undocumented immigrants in the nation compassionately.

As Christians, we acknowledge that we must think through the question of illegal



By Rob Chambers
Miss. Baptist Christian Action Comm.

The following commentary on immigration reform is authored in part by The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention

immigration not only as offended, concerned citizens, but also as compassionate Christians. Jesus instructed His followers to love all men, even those who hate them (see Luke 6:27-38). He instructed His followers to meet the needs of those who are suffering (Matthew 25:31-46). The writer of the Book of Hebrews instructed his readers to "show hospitality to strangers" (Hebrews 13:2).

As Christian citizens, we believe God has something to say to us about how our nation deals with this issue. We believe our nation must think about immigration from the perspective of all parties affected. We believe that God sought to teach Israel to think about justice in this way as well. He told His people, "You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly" (Leviticus 19:15).

The issue of immigration must also be considered from the perspective of the core values of the welcoming nation. God ordained civil government (Romans 13:1-7). He charged it with the responsibility of providing for the security, wellbeing, and protection of the people under its authority. As such, the civil authority has a responsibility to assure that its policies honor this charge from God.

While we are certain that many details must be addressed, we offer below what we consider to be the primary features of a just immigration policy. We believe these features incorporate our nation's core values and God's guidance for the treatment of immigrants in a way that respects both the rule of law and the dignity of the millions of men, women, and children who are currently living here illegally.

Secure Borders. We expect any system that is put in place to be able to prohibit illegal entry.

Appropriate and adequate penalties and requirements. If those who are here illegally desire to remain here, they must undergo a criminal background check, pay a fine, agree to pay back taxes, learn to speak, write, and read English and get in line

behind those who are legally migrating into this country in order to apply for permanent residence after a probationary period of years. They must also acknowledge and pledge allegiance to America's governmental structure, the duties of citizenship and our core values as embodied in the Declaration of Independence.

Adequate penalties for those who hire undocumented immigrants. Businesses that hire workers illegally do so for profit. Such businesses should be penalized for their own participation in the encouragement of illegal immigration and breaking the nation's employment and labor laws.

Paths to legal status. The nation should offer multiple forms of legal status with appropriate requirements for each. We propose that our nation pursue all these avenues simultaneously, such as citizenship, permanent or temporary legal residency, temporary worker, etc.

A dependable worker verification system. The government must provide businesses with a responsive, up-to-date system that enables them to verify a worker's status within one week.

Chambers can be contacted at 601-292-3331 or at rchambers@christianaction.com.

PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES for Christian Living

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Considering immigration reform as both Christians and citizens

By Rob Chambers
Miss. Baptist Christian Action Comm.

The following commentary on immigration reform is authored in part by The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention

The time has come for our nation to resolve its immigration dilemma. It is imperative that we find an acceptable solution to the disposition of the millions of undocumented immigrants living in our nation.

Currently, the two extremes of deportation and amnesty are being played against each other, resulting in a stalemate in Congress. We believe that neither of the two extremes are appropriate, workable solutions. To force those who are here illegally to leave is neither politically viable nor humanitarian.

To offer blanket amnesty to those who broke the immigration laws of our country and their own countries is disrespectful of the rule of law. What is needed is a solution that respects the rule of law while at the same time treats undocumented immigrants in the nation compassionately.

As Christians, we acknowledge that we must think through the question of illegal

law, which passed in 1996 by super majorities of 84-15 in the Senate and 342-67 in the House and was signed by U.S. President Bill Clinton.

The move by the advisory group does not require approval by the full House.

The move by the House Bipartisan Leadership Advisory Group came two weeks after President Obama ordered the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to stop defending the act, which was signed into law in 1996 and defines marriage for federal purposes as between one man and one woman. A handful of federal lawsuits against it are pending.

Obama said he believes the law is unconstitutional. Although a court ruled it unconstitutional in 2010, other federal courts have upheld it. Observers expect the DOMA lawsuit will eventually come before the U.S. Supreme Court.

"This action by the House will ensure that this law's constitutionality is decided by the courts, rather than by the President unilaterally," Boehner said. Joining Boehner in voting to defend the law were Majority Leader Eric Cantor of Virginia and Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy of California, all three Republicans. Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi of California and Minority Whip Steny Hoyer of Maryland, the two Democrats, voted against House action.

If the lawsuits against DOMA are successful, the federal government would be forced for the first time to recognize the same sex marriages of states such as Massachusetts, where the unions upon which DOMA was overruled by Congress and signed into law by former

President Clinton remain core values for the majority of Americans.

"I am grateful the House will initiate a vigorous defense of the Defense of Marriage Act," said Southern Baptist Convention President Bryant Wright, pastor of Johnson Ferry Church in Marietta, Ga. "The principles upon which DOMA was overruled by Congress and signed into law by former

President Clinton remain core values for the majority of Americans.

"Historically, human procreation within the context of a loving nuclear family has formed the basis of a stable society. This creation pattern occurs in the union of a man and a woman in marriage, and is a central tenet in all religions. It has been the norm across all generations. It has been the ideal in virtually all cultures. I pray it will remain so in our beloved nation," Page said.

Technically, the current lawsuits only target half of the Defense of Marriage Act — the part that defines marriage in federal law. The other half of DOMA gives states the option of not recognizing another state's same sex marriages. Obama, though, has made clear he opposes the law and others had been critical of the way the Justice Department was defending the

"DOMA deserves better than the half-hearted defense it has been getting so far," Feulner wrote in a Townhall.com column.

MARCH 17, 2011

MARCH 17, 2011

THE BAPTIST RECORD

JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. First Church, Belmont



MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS

1. First Church, Belmont recently retired the debt of \$439,200 on their Family Life Center. Shown are Jerry McAnally, Terrell Pearson, Mark Maroon, Steve McAnally, Bob Yarber, Mark Henry, and pastor Ray Burks.



5. Madden Church, Madden



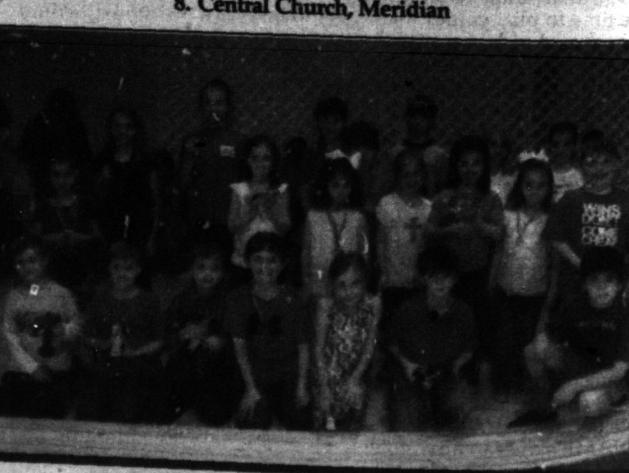
6. Smart recognition



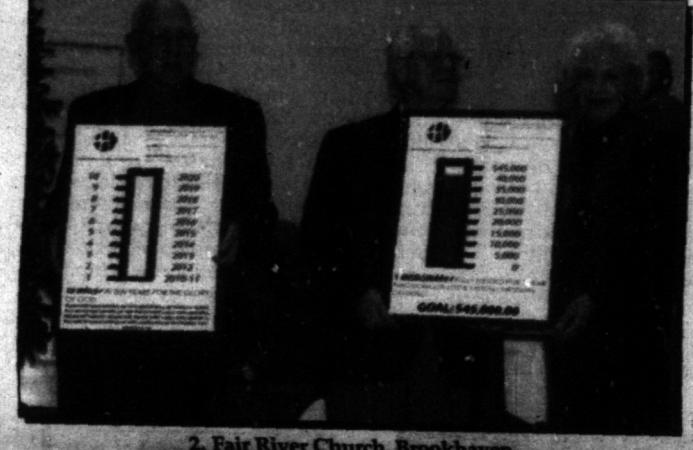
7. Mt. Olivet Church, Scott County



8. Central Church, Meridian



9. East Philadelphia Church, Philadelphia



2. Fair River Church, Brookhaven



3. Barry and Denise Corbett



4. Lester and Linda and Danny Prater

1. First Church, Belmont recently retired the debt of \$439,200 on their Family Life Center. Shown are Jerry McAnally, Terrell Pearson, Mark Maroon, Steve McAnally, Bob Yarber, Mark Henry, and pastor Ray Burks.

2. Richard Douglas, Fair River Church, Brookhaven, celebrated the completion of the first well of the goal of ten wells in ten years. Also, Jerry and Bobbey Rankin celebrated the Lottie Moon Christmas offering of \$55,240.

3. First Church, Kosciusko, recently honored pastor Barry C. Corbett upon the celebration of his 20 years of ministry as pastor, including special recognitions during the morning worship service and a luncheon. Shown are Corbett and Denise Corbett.

4. First Church, Inverness, held a reception honoring Priscilla Lester for 47 years as church organist, Linda Prater for 24 years as minister of music, and Danny Prater for 30 years of service as pastor.

5. The Children in Action of Madden Church, Madden, participated in Children's Ministry Day by delivering cookies, flowers, and cards to members of the community for Valentine's Day. Shown are the participants.

6. The Brotherhood of Concord Church, Booneville, recognized Bobby Smart as the "Man of the Year" on Baptist Men's Day. Shown are Lyle Bullock and Smart.

7. The children and youth of Mt. Olivet Church, Scott County, recently presented a talent show. Shown are the participants. Bruce Robinson, pastor.

8. Central Church, Meridian's, Sunday School class for the first five years of marriage recently completed a 40-day Love Dare challenge. Shown are Craig & Christy Lea and Phillip & Bethany Garrett, who recommitted themselves to each other during a recent marriage recommitment ceremony led by pastor Gary Blair.

9. East Philadelphia Church, Philadelphia, had older kids participate in a Pine Car Race. Shown are the participants.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



10. First Church, Booneville



11. Canaan Church, Columbus



CHANGING COURSE — Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, set forth the Southern Baptist agency's new Send North America evangelistic church planting strategy during sessions with 400-plus associational directors of missions and church planting missionaries in Atlanta in late February. (BP photo)

ATLANTA (BP) — "It's a new day at NAMB," North American Mission Board President Kevin Ezell said in addressing more than 400 associational directors of missions and church planting missionaries from across North America. "We're not just moving the deck chairs around."

Ezell spoke during NAMB's 2011 Associational Directors of Missions Forum on Feb. 21-23, and the Church Planting Missionary Forum on Feb. 23-25, both in Atlanta.

Setting forth NAMB's new Send North America evangelistic church planting strategy, Ezell said the mission board intends to change the conversation on church planting across the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

"We want to send a message to the SBC that our focus is on church planting and that we're trying to get our act together," Ezell said, adding that while church planting is NAMB's top priority, "it's not the only thing we do. We are not gutting evangelism. We will continue to do evangelism because you can't do church planting without evangelism. The purpose of everything we do is to bring people to Christ and penetrate lostness."

Ezell told the associational and church planting leaders that skepticism and negativity must end among NAMB, some of the 42 state conventions, and some of the 1,200 associations.

"We're too late in the process. People are dying and going to hell. Our resources are less than they once were. We don't have time to play games. We've got to be big boys and girls, get over it, and fix it. We cannot let down the next generation by being prideful and insistent on doing things the same way. We're going to do whatever it takes to get the job done."

Ezell, himself a former pastor, said since being named NAMB's president last September, he's traveled from Boston to Los Angeles visiting state conventions and associations, and that many state and association staff have visited NAMB.

"I think we can change the conversation," he said. "Leaders change the conversation. We're still refining the strategy together. It's not perfect yet. We just want to send out a clear message about what we are valuing and what we want to promote because we all have to change."

NAMB's overarching goal, Ezell said, is to focus first on evangelistic church planting that is infused with evangelism

and leadership development. "We want to mobilize and equip thousands of churches, along with the associations and existing church planting networks, to engage in church planting."

"A South Carolina pastor recently told me, 'My church wants to be involved in planting churches but we don't know how.' That's what we at NAMB want to help them do. As NAMB, the states, and as associations, we must begin to think Kingdom-wise to reach North America, not just think about our own church or our local association."

During his one-hour talk followed by questions and answers, Ezell outlined the five-region structure under which NAMB, the state Baptist conventions, and the associations will work together.

"We're not putting little 'Nambies' out there or buying buildings. We're not building a huge bureaucratic infrastructure in the regions," Ezell said. "It's not very glamorous."

The initial 25 cities listed in the Send North America emphasis "will not ultimately be the only cities we focus on" in the five regions, Ezell said. "It's not a matter of being the 24th city or the 35th city. We just want to mobilize Southern Baptists to plant churches where God leads them. We're not limited to the 25 cities."

NAMB also is at work in the area of leadership development, coaching and mentoring, but "we're not there yet," Ezell said. "We want to especially do a better job of supporting our bivocational pastors, who work very hard and get very little assistance."

Addressing the work of associational directors of missions, Ezell said NAMB is creating a new, jointly-funded strategic role for the directors of missions, a role more highly focused on NAMB's new Send North America strategy of planting churches, but also one that continues to assist struggling churches.

Ezell said some 200 jointly-funded missions directors will see their job title change to "church planting catalyst." Effective Jan. 1, the job description of the church planting catalysts will include:

- Mobilizing existing churches to engage in evangelistic church planting.
- Encouraging churches to engage in evangelistic activity.
- Encouraging and cultivating a pastor/leader skill set among pastors in the associations.

• Personal involvement in planting a church and/or be a member of a church plant. This requirement is optional.

"Just because you don't feel like you need more churches in your association or state, that doesn't mean you can't mobilize your church to plant new churches somewhere else, say, in another state," Ezell said.

"The old scoreboard was about how many churches you planted in your association or state. The new scoreboard is about how many churches in your state or association are planting churches in North America. It might be three in Mississippi and 30 somewhere else."

The jointly funded missions directors will be given an opportunity to receive training in order to maximize their strengths, equip them for their new role, and help them adjust to the new strategy, Ezell said.

Marc Bewley, jointly funded director of missions for the Blue Water Association in Chesterfield, Mich., for the most part liked what Ezell had to say.

"I spend 50-60% of my time in church planting now," said Bewley,

who has served in his current post the last three years. "I'm a firm believer in church planting and I think it's great that it's now NAMB's No. 1 priority."

"One thing that did concern me is there was a lot of generality in the new job description. I'd like to hear more details, and most of my churches are going to want more details. They're going to wonder if they'll be ignored since I'll be doing even-more church planting," Bewley said.

Bewley said he didn't disagree with anything Ezell discussed. "I especially liked the part of not having so many hoops (involving NAMB, the Michigan state Baptist convention, and the local association) to jump through. I really like the new regional set-up, and look forward to working with Steve Davis," who has been named as the region's vice president for NAMB.

Bewley said he believes the Jan. 1, deadline for launching the new church planting catalyst jobs is a realistic time frame and "more than a generous amount of time to work through the issues."

Strategist aims for more African American missionaries

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — A recent report from the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee affirms what Keith Jefferson, the new African American mobilization strategist for the International Mission Board (IMB), realized when he set foot on the mission field: God can use ethnic minorities in a big way.

The ethnic involvement report, containing a number of recommendations for greater ethnic diversity within all areas of Southern Baptist life including international missions, will be presented to messengers at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting to be held in June in Phoenix.

African Americans "can serve God all around the world," Jefferson says, "not just in places that have people of African origin."

The call to missions is not optional, he says. "It is an oblig-

ation; it is a commandment; and no child of God can get around the Great Commission that Jesus gave us — preaching the Gospel to all peoples."

Jefferson spent 16 years as a Southern Baptist missionary sharing Jesus among Brazil's Quilombola people, descendants of escaped African slaves. More accustomed to traveling the Amazon Basin than sitting behind a desk, the role of African American mobilizer is new to Jefferson, who accepted the role following the retirement of David Cornelius last December.

"My focus is to encourage, challenge, and train African American churches and individuals in being on mission with God," Jefferson says. "Some think that missions is for people who are spiritual giants... Actually, it only takes a person who is available and willing, has the strength to get on and off an airplane and hold a conversation with somebody about the love of God."

Honestly, I was a little bit irritated that he didn't think that my mission pastor work was sufficient," Jefferson laughs. "I mean, here I am, a mission pastor and a full-time chaplain. I am serving God."

When Cornelius asked Jefferson's wife Deborah the same question, she surprised her husband by immediately saying she would pray about it. After two fortuitous encounters



Jefferson

identify with their same ethnicity: 'I'm black, he's black. He's doing it, so I can do it.'

You'd think this wouldn't be necessary but people are people. It's always helpful for them to see someone from their ethnic group doing God's work."

It was Cornelius who first challenged Jefferson, then a bivocational church planter and chaplain, to consider serving God on "foreign soil."

"Honestly, I was a little bit irritated that he didn't think that my mission pastor work was sufficient," Jefferson laughs. "I mean, here I am, a mission pastor and a full-time chaplain. I am serving God."

When Cornelius asked Jefferson's wife Deborah the same question, she surprised her husband by immediately saying she would pray about it. After two fortuitous encounters

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COLLEGE NEWS

1. The new William Carey University Student Government Association (SGA) officers for the 2011 – 2012 school year are: (front row, left to right) Sarah Nobles of Purvis; Deepali Amaty of Lalitpur, India; Bibhusha Pradhan of Kathmandu, Nepal; Courtney Daley of Carson; Marian Mauseth of Indianola; Amanda Sumrall of Clinton; Torrie Atkins of Hattiesburg; and Jonathan Clements of Petal; Nicky Holland of Meridian; Anton Haeggloef of Stockholm, Sweden; Benjamin Gerhart of Millport, Ala.; Patrick Earley of Raceland, La.; Quinton Soronen of Collinsville; and Chelsey Maywalt of Carriere.



1. William Carey University SGA



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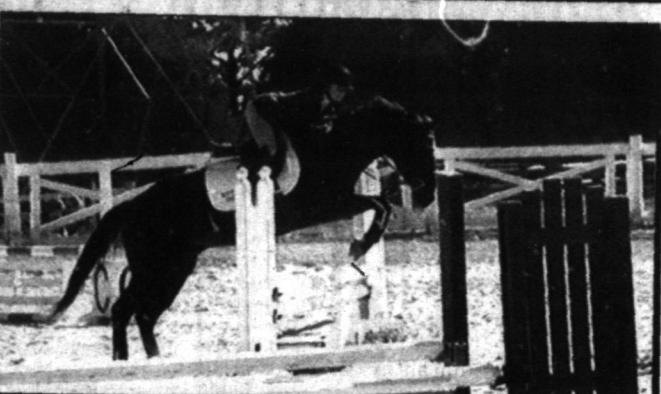
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Space is limited and \$300 deposits are now due!

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Rachel Harris of Petal; Jay Holfield of Pascagoula; Randi Clark of Purvis; Colton Lee of Poplarville; Jonathan Clements of Petal; Nicky Holland of Meridian; Anton Haeggloef of Stockholm, Sweden; Benjamin Gerhart of Millport, Ala.; Patrick Earley of Raceland, La.; Quinton Soronen of Collinsville; and Chelsey Maywalt of Carriere.



3. Hayes

Bhutan will be in the spotlight at Mississippi College's fourth annual International Festival on March 25. The 90-minute event will combine a fashion show with music, dancing and other entertainment on stage at Swor Auditorium. The show begins at 7 p.m. The program is free and open to MC faculty, staff and students. Jackson area residents are also invited. For more information, contact Andrea Haynes at (601) 925-7705 or ahaynes@mc.edu.

5. Randall Miller, Mississippi College, received the outstanding speaker award at a college debate tournament at Sam Houston State University. Miller was among 136 debaters at the double tournament on the Texas campus March 4-6. Other schools competing included East Texas Baptist, the University of Arkansas-Monticello, Louisiana College, the University of Central Arkansas and Sam Houston State.

6. Mississippi College's School of Nursing is presenting its annual Health Fair on April 11th. The fair's theme is "Don't Jeopardize Your Health!" The event will be held at the Baptist Healthplex on the Clinton campus from 8:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. This free fair will provide health screenings targeting adults who are 40-years-old and up. For more information about the Health Fair, contact the MC School of Nursing at 601-925-3391.

7. Mississippi College biology professor, Beth Dunigan has been named MC Distinguished Arts & Sciences Lecturer for the College of Arts and Sciences. The Clinton resident teaches human gross anatomy, biology, and comparative and developmental anatomy.



STAFF CHANGES

1. Calvary Church, Pascagoula, has called Mike Moreland as youth pastor.



1. Moreland

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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

DECEMBER 16-31, 2010

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Powerful QR technology ready made for ministry

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP) — Recently the news has focused on how the use of smartphones has given a wake-up call to politicians as the phones have been instrumental changing politics in Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya, but smartphones are not only toppling powerful dictators.

They also have been reported to have deposed another unchallenged king of the mountain: the personal computer.

Technology researchers reported that smartphone shipments surpassed PC shipments in the past quarter. Now some ministry leaders are getting the call to create smart phone outreach using mobile websites and bar code scanners. New Quick Response (QR) barcode technology is revolutionizing communications, and many churches are deciding it is wise for ministers to incorporate the smart phone into their outreach planning.

A QR code is a matrix barcode that can be read by smartphone cameras with QR scanner apps installed. An estimated 40% of all smartphone owners have downloaded a barcode scanning app. Mobile technology experts report that during the last six months of 2010 QR code scanning increased 1,200% across North America.

The QR codes are popping up everywhere, from your local grocery store to electronic billboards in Times Square. This new generation of bar codes is more powerful and flexible than previous ones. QR codes can hold more than 200 times the data of a regular barcode.

The QR codes were originally created in 1994 by a subsidiary of Toyota for the purpose of tracking parts in vehicle manufacturing. Now they are being used to quickly get information into people's hands. Marketers use QR codes for a variety of functions, ranging from directing the phone to a simple website to saving contact information.

The QR codes can send an e-mail or text message to a predetermined address. The codes also can prompt users to save event information in their phone's calendar.

It's not just businesses that are clicking with QR codes. Churches are starting to wise up about smart phones. First Church in Edmund, Ok., is using the

technology to send messages to mobile-savvy people in their community.

"We used QR codes extensively in a recent outreach to our community to raise awareness about our new 11:05 a.m. service. We included the codes in all our print material, banners, and in newspaper advertisements" said Kevin Pruitt, an associate pastor at the church.

"People can scan the QR and the code jumps their cell phone right to our mobile page. We also created stencil versions of our QR code using spray chalk to put them on the college campus sidewalks. It was exciting: Students were scanning the codes almost as fast as we were spraying them onto the sidewalks."

Here are a few ways churches could use QR codes:

- Engage visitors: Link visitors to a YouTube video giving them a virtual tour or highlighting different activities or small groups.

- Promote events: Drive people to a mobile website that gives more information about your upcoming event and the opportunity to register right on their phones.

- Outreach: Link people to a mobile website page that highlights the church's outreach efforts in the community or gives them access to helpful resources from your church.

- Stay connected: Allow people to opt-in to regular informational updates — whether text message updates or a link for them to "like" your Facebook fan page.

- Evangelism: Print media, outdoor advertisements and theater advertisements can point seekers to mobile websites, videos and hotlines where they can explore the Gospel.

As new and creative ways to utilize QR codes come online, some best practices will ensure success and engagement:

- Help people understand what they are looking at and how to use it.

- Make sure the church is linked to a mobile-enabled website. Mobile-enabled sites provide a much better customer experience and prevent people from having to pull, pinch, and scroll a website that was designed for

a desktop computer and is difficult to view on a phone.

- Promote QR codes in many different places: bulletins, posters, flyers, websites, stickers, etc.

- Make sure there is good mobile service coverage. A creative campaign can be wasted in an area with poor cell signal.

- Test QR codes before launching. Besides ensuring it does what is intended, make sure it can be easily scanned by your audience. For instance, if a QR code is a projection screen, make sure it can be read from the position where people will be viewing the screen.

- Use a QR generator that creates easily scanned codes. Some services generate codes that can only be read by their specific scanner. Codes that can't be read by most scanners will cause frustration for your audience.

Here are a few free resources below to help get started using QR codes for church or ministry today:

Free QR code generators:

- Deliver: [http://delivr.com/qr-code-generator](http://delivr.com/)
- Zing: <http://www.zxing.appspot.com/generator/>
- Kaywa: <http://qrcode.kaywa.com/>
- Keremerkhan: <http://www.keremerkhan.net/qr-code-and-2d-code-generator/>
- Google: <http://goo.gl>

Free QR code readers:

- BeeTagg: <http://beetagg.com>
- ScanLife: <http://scanolife.com>
- i-nigma: <http://i-nigma.com>



Congressman: Women's Day no cause for celebration in China

WASHINGTON (BP and local reports) — Females in China had little reason to celebrate the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day on March 8, a United States congressman and human rights activists said.

Rep. Chris Smith, (R-NJ), and fellow opponents of the communist giant's oppressive, population-control program told reporters Chinese women are suffering in unprecedented fashion under what is known as the one-child policy, which limits the number of children women can have.

"The coercive enforcement of China's one-child policy does more violence against women and girls than any other official policy on earth and any other official policy in the history of the world," said Reggie Littlejohn, president of Women's Rights Without Frontiers.

China's one-child policy generally limits couples in urban areas to one child and those in rural areas to two, if the first is a girl. Parents in cities now may have second babies if the husband and wife were only children.

The government also requires all women to have a birth permit before becoming pregnant and it monitors the reproductive cycles of women of child-bearing age.

The state actions against women have included forced abortions on women in the eighth and ninth months of pregnancy, as well as compulsory sterilizations and infanticide, according to reports. Penalties for violations of the policy also have included fines, arrests, and the destruction of homes.

Smith called the policy the "most heinous attack on women ever." Reports have surfaced of

full-term babies being torn from their mothers' bodies and placed face-down in a bucket of water at the foot of the delivery table.

"[T]oo few people outside China understand the massive and cruel repression and violence perpetrated, intentionally and systematically, on hundreds of millions of women" by the government, he said.

International Women's Day has celebrated since 1911 what the sponsoring organization describes as the "economic, political, and social achievements of women." For more than 30 years, however, Chinese women have lived under a regime marked by forced abortion, coercive sterilization, and even infanticide of female babies as male children are seen as more desirable under the one-child policy.

The repercussions are mounting, Smith and Littlejohn said at

a Capitol Hill news conference on the eve of International Women's Day, and include:

- 500 suicides per day by Chinese women, according to the World Health Organization, making China the only country in the world with a higher female suicide rate than that of males.

- More than 120 male babies born for every 100 female babies born, in a growing gender imbalance that will leave by 2020 as many as 40 million Chinese men unable to find wives "because they have been exterminated," Smith said.

One of the fallouts from the gender imbalance is an increasing sex trafficking problem, the congressman told reporters.

"China is on the cusp of being the haven for sex traffickers," Smith said. "It is a magnet today that will only get worse because of the lack

of girls, ...directly attributable to the one-child public policy."

Smith called for an end to the apparent indifference demonstrated by the Obama administration and the United Nations.

He asked U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at a recent congressional hearing if President Obama had raised the issue of forced abortion with Chinese President Hu Jintao. Clinton said she did not know, Smith told reporters.

"That, in and of itself, underscores how this issue has been trivialized," Smith said.

He criticized U.S. funding of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which has been found to support China's one-child program. Obama has reinstated support for UNFPA, providing more than \$100 million to the agency the last two years.